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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD MILITARY TRIBUNAL ISSUES  
VERDICTS

REF: A. 2007 CAIRO 1361  
[1B](#). 2007 CAIRO 2683  
[1C](#). 2007 CAIRO 2808  
[1D](#). 2007 CAIRO 3018  
[1E](#). CAIRO 562

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs  
William R. Stewart, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1](#). (SBU) Summary: In the latest installment of the GOE's ongoing crackdown against the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the military tribunal against forty MB members issued verdicts on April 15, nearly one year after the trial started in April 2007. Fifteen defendants were acquitted, but the other twenty-five, including the MB's third-most senior official, were sentenced to prison terms ranging between 3-10 years. The military tribunal moved forward despite multiple orders over the past year from civilian courts ordering the release of the defendants (refs C and D). MB leaders have angrily denounced the verdict, and plan to appeal it to another military court, likely with no success. The ruling is indicative of the GOE's decreasing tolerance for the MB, and it is anticipated that the prolonged detention of the group's most senior moderate leader will empower the MB's more conservative wing. End summary.

[¶2](#). (SBU) In verdicts issued April 15 by the military tribunal, twenty-five of the forty MB members on trial received prison sentences ranging between 3-10 years, on charges including money laundering and planning terrorist activities. Fifteen of the MB defendants were acquitted. Five of those sentenced to 10 year prison terms were tried in absentia, and reside outside of Egypt. The other twenty will serve jail terms, including a 7-year term for Khayrat Al Shatir, the third-most senior official in the organization and Hassan Malek, a prominent businessman, and 3-year terms for Mohamed Ali Bishr, a member of the MB's Guidance Office, the group's senior leadership body, and the other seventeen defendants. The ruling also ordered the confiscation of all assets of the defendants, several of whom are wealthy businessmen, and whose companies and property are valued in the USD millions.

[¶3](#). (SBU) In moving forward with the military tribunals, the GOE ignored four decisions by various civil courts that ruled against the use of military tribunals, and ordered the release of the detainees. Among Egypt's activist community, the tribunals are viewed as politically motivated, and in an unusual move, numerous liberal activists and political parties previously condemned the use of the tribunals against the MB. On April 15, Amnesty International condemned the ruling as a 'perversion of justice,' and called for the defendants to be released and retried in a civilian court.

[¶4](#). (U) The MB has announced it plans to appeal the ruling.  
(Note: Under Egyptian law, a decision by a military tribunal

can be appealed once, to another military court. End note.) MB Supreme Guide Mahdi Akef condemned the verdict, saying that there was "no evidence" against the defendants, and calling the Egyptian government "corrupt" and "a bunch of thugs." MB Deputy Supreme Guide Mohamed Habib said that the "unfair" rulings, "demonstrate the extent of the Egyptian regime's severity and violence in dealing with its political opponents who are seeking peaceful reform .... Such military verdicts are not only against the MB, in an attempt to marginalize them, but against all Egyptians, to intimidate and terrify them into not daring to oppose the regime's policies."

¶15. (C) Comment: Egyptian analysts view the April 15 ruling as indicative of the GOE's decreasing tolerance for the MB. One termed the 7-year sentence given to MB leader Al Shatir as the harshest verdict given to an MB leader since Nasser's crackdown on the Islamist group in the 1960's. Al Shatir is widely viewed as one of the MB's leading moderates (ref E), and it is anticipated that his prolonged absence from the group will empower the MB's more conservative wing.

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